

### REMARKS

This responds to the Office Action mailed on October 3, 2008.

Claim 1 is amended, claims 1-28 are now pending in this application.

#### The 35 U.S.C. § 103 Rejection

Claims 1-28 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Prasad et al. (U.S. Publication No. 2002/0155061; hereinafter "Prasad") in view of Allam et al. (U.S. Publication No. 2002/0103264; hereinafter "Allam").

#### *Claim 1*

Claim 1 is amended to better describe the claimed subject matter.

Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection and submits that the Office Action does not set forth a proper *prima facie* case of obviousness because the cited portions of Prasad and Allam, individually or in combination with each other, and reasoning given in the Office Action, do not provide the claimed subject matter. For example, Applicant is unable to find in the cited portions of Prasad and Allam, individually or in combination, among other things, combining a reactive mixture produced by combining a stream of reactive diluent fluid with a stream of said exothermically-generated syngas product in a catalytic second reactor to produce a reacted syngas product, as recited in claim 1. Applicant is unable to find in the Office Action a proper reason that remedies this deficiency of the cited references.

The Office Action asserts that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to use processes known in the art with the method outlined by Prasad to efficiently produce syngas and fuels from the syngas.

This assertion is respectfully traversed as an improper conclusory statement made without a specific ground of reasoning. For example, the Office Action fails to indicate how the "processes known in the art" are used to modify Prasad's process and why one of ordinary skill in the art would expect success in the modified process. Application respectfully requests specific reasoning in support of the assertion, or its withdrawal.

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and allowance of claim 1.

*Claims 2-28*

Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection. Claims 2-28 depend on claim 1, which is believed to be patentable for at least the reasons set forth above. Therefore, the discussion above for claim 1 is incorporated herein to support the patentability of claims 2-28.

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and allowance of claims 2-28.

**CONCLUSION**

Applicant respectfully submits that the claims are in condition for allowance, and notification to that effect is earnestly requested. The Examiner is invited to telephone Applicant's representative at (612) 373-6959 to facilitate prosecution of this application.

If necessary, please charge any additional fees or credit overpayment to Deposit Account No. 19-0743.

Respectfully submitted,

SCHWEGMAN, LUNDBERG & WOESSNER, P.A.  
P.O. Box 2938  
Minneapolis, MN 55402  
(612) 373-6959

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By /Janet E. Embretson/

Janet E. Embretson  
Reg. No. 39,665

**CERTIFICATE UNDER 37 CFR 1.8:** The undersigned hereby certifies that this correspondence is being filed using the USPTO's electronic filing system EFS-Web, and is addressed to: Mail Stop Amendment, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 on January 2, 2009.

Kathryn McCook  
Name

Kathryn McCook  
Signature